(b) if so, the findings thereof and whether the study recommended for lifting of ban on asbestos leasing;

(c) whether Government have an intention to implement these suggestions and lifting ban on leasing and renewal of leases of asbestos mining; and

(d) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) to (d) In 1998, Ministry of Mines had approved a S&T Project titled 'Study of Pollution Level in Asbestos Mines and processing plants in Rajasthan' to be undertaken by Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), a subordinate office of the Ministry to assess the feasibility of lifting the ban on expansion of asbestos mining through a scientific study of pollution level in asbestos mines and processing plants in Rajasthan and in Andhra Pradesh and to suggest appropriate mitigation measures. The Study recommended that the ban imposed on grant and renewal of mining leases and expansion of mining may be lifted subject to control of pollution level in work environment of various operations and other remedial measures.

Recommendations of the Study have been examined in consultation with all Stake holders. Some stake holders have suggested that the asbestos mining can be permitted with appropriate safeguards. IBM in consultation with Central Pollution Control Board has been asked to work out these safeguards. At present the ban on mining of asbestos has not been lifted.

MoUs with State Governments

1295. SHRI CHITTABRATA MUJUMDAR:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of MoUs signed with steel manufacturers by the State Government of Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand during last one year for iron ore mining;

(b) the tentative commitment for allocation of iron ore reserves in the MoUs to the steel makers MoU wise; and

(c) the proven iron ore reserves in the above States, as estimated by the Indian Bureau of Mines?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) As per information available, details are given below:

State	Number of MoUs signed with steel Manufacturers
Orissa	16
Jharkhand	29
Chhattisgarh	07

(b) As the MoUs have been signed by the State Governments concerned detailed information on such commitments are not centrally maintained.

(c) As per the estimates of the Indian Bureau of Mines, details of proven reserves of iron ore in these three States, as on 1.4.2000, are given below:—

(in '000 tonnes)

State	
Orissa	1109679
Chhattisgarh	426177
Jharkhand	2296604

Panel to Examine Mineral Proceesing

1296. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set up a high level panel to examine whether the minerals mined within the State of Orissa, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh etc. should be processed for value addition within the States and only the final product would go out;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the terms of reference of the panel;

(c) whether the panel will also examine the ways and means to augment the State revenues from the Mineral sector; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?